United Nations E/C.12/CAN/Q/6/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 February 2016

Original: English and French
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Fifty-seventh session
22 February-4 March 2016
Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

List of issues in relation to the sixth periodic report of Canada

Addendum

Replies of Canada to the list of issues*

[Date received: 4 February 2016]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.16-02025(E)

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1. Given the Committee's word limits, a non-exhaustive list of federal and provincial/territorial (F-P/T) measures in response to the List of Issues (LOI) is outlined below. As part of the preparation of Canada's response, several civil society and Indigenous organizations shared their views on the LOI. Where appropriate, and to the extent possible, these issues are also addressed in this response.

Question 1

2. The Covenant is implemented in Canada through a wide range of F-P/T laws, policies and programs. Canada does not generally enact one piece of legislation to incorporate an entire treaty on human rights into domestic law.

3. While the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter) mainly protects civil and political rights, it protects some aspects of the Covenant, namely, freedom of association, Indigenous and treaty rights, mobility, language and minority language education rights. Section 15 of the Charter guarantees, as a stand-alone right, substantive equality to all individuals. Laws, policies and programs that impact economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights are subject to this guarantee. Finally, the Charter must be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada.

4. F-P/T human rights legislation apply to the public and private sectors and prohibit discrimination on various grounds in employment, housing and the provision of goods, services and facilities.

5. International treaties ratified by Canada are not directly applicable domestically, but are relevant to the interpretation of human rights protections under domestic law and the Charter. Canada's international human rights treaty obligations are regularly invoked before and considered by domestic courts.

- Recent cases in which the Supreme Court relied on the Covenant to interpret the Charter include:
    - *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan*, 2015 SCC 4 (right to strike).
    - *Ontario (Attorney General) v. Fraser*, 2011 SCC 20 and *Health Services and Support-Facilities Subsector Bargaining Assn. v. British Columbia*, 2007 SCC 27 (freedom of association).
- The Supreme Court of British Columbia referenced the Covenant in:
    - *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz*, 2015 BCSC 1909, finding that the City of Abbotsford's bylaws prohibiting homeless people from sleeping or being in a city park overnight, or from erecting a temporary shelter, without permits violate section 7 of the Charter (right to life, liberty and security of person).
    - Reference re: Section 293 of the Criminal Code of Canada, 2011 BCSC 1588, finding that the prohibition against polygamy in the Criminal Code is constitutional.

Question 2

6. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada. In July 2014, Canada announced the development of a new reconciliation framework for addressing section 35 rights and a series of engagement

processes were launched with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and other stakeholders. The information gained through these processes will inform the development of this new framework as part of Canada's commitment to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

7. Governments are helping Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, adapt to the challenges posed by climate change:

- Federal financial support for adaptation planning activities, such as climate change risk assessments in northern First Nations and Inuit communities and the development of health adaptation plans and information tools to address the risks.
- An investment, under Quebec's 2013-2020 Government Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation, to produce maps of permafrost characteristics in targeted northern communities; and financial assistance to the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute to develop and implement adaptation plans for Indigenous communities in the province.
- Yukon's Climate Change Strategy aims to enhance awareness and understanding of climate change impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and build environmental, social and economic systems able to adapt to climate change impacts. In 2012, the Government made a five-year investment in Cold Climate Innovation, a division of the Yukon Research Centre, for the continuing development and commercialization of cold climate technologies to address the needs of northerners and their communities.

8. Regarding the Innu of Quebec, negotiations to reach a final comprehensive land claim and self-government agreement between the Mashteuiatsh, Essipit and Nutashkuan First Nations, the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada are progressing. The Parties are aiming to reach a final agreement as quickly as possible in 2016.

9. The parties to the negotiation of a comprehensive land claim and self-government agreement between the Innu of Labrador, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Government of Canada made progress in 2014-2015 in respect of several outstanding issues. The parties remain committed to regular negotiating sessions in order to progress towards completion of a Final Agreement.

10. Canada is committed to the goal of a lasting land claim settlement with the Lubicon Lake Band. In March 2015, the Government of Canada appointed a Chief Federal Negotiator for land claim discussions with the First Nation, building upon the agreed December 2014 Negotiation Framework, to establish the path forward to resolving the claim.

Question 3

11. F-P/T governments have a legal duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous peoples when the Crown contemplates conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Indigenous or treaty rights.

12. The legal duty to consult may arise in a variety of circumstances related to resource development: disposal of Crown property, environmental assessment decisions, regulatory authorizations related to major project development, etc. P/T governments own and manage lands within their borders and have extensive responsibilities over resource development. Where both levels of government have a duty to consult, they work together to ensure that this duty is fulfilled.

13. Governments are committed to Indigenous-Crown consultation and accommodation that are fair, efficient, accessible, transparent and meaningful.

- The Government of Canada has integrated the legal duty to consult into established project reviews to the extent possible (e.g. Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA), National Energy Board Act (NEBA)).
- The Government of Ontario has incorporated provisions respecting consultation with Indigenous peoples into key pieces of legislation such as the Green Energy Act, the Far North Act and its 2009 Mining Act amendments.
- Pursuant to its Mining Act, the Government of Quebec is developing a policy on consultation with Indigenous communities for the mining sector. Furthermore, in 2008, it developed an Interim Guide for Consulting the Aboriginal Communities.

14. Regarding gender-based analysis (GBA) in relation to development projects, broad guidance can be found in the 2011 Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult. Additionally:

- The Government of Canada requires that GBA be conducted for any federal initiatives that are presented to Cabinet and Treasury Board Secretariat.
- All Government of Yukon submissions to their Cabinet are required to look at the differential impacts on women and First Nations.
- The Government of New Brunswick is making GBA mandatory for all public sector policy and government decision-making, including resource development projects.
- Gender equality issues were integrated in a crosscutting manner in the Government of Quebec's Plan Nord towards 2035: 2015-2020 Action Plan for issues related to workforce, health and social services, public safety, housing, and the full participation of women, especially Indigenous women, in all aspects of northern development.

Question 4

15. Under the CEAA, the Pipeline Safety Act (PSA) and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, Canada expects companies to consult and address possible impacts on Indigenous peoples in Canada. Combined with environmental assessment and regulatory processes, this ensures opportunities to identify potential impacts of projects on ESC rights and implement mitigation plans early in the project. Compliance and follow-up mechanisms ensure adherence to plans and that Indigenous groups are engaged on an on-going basis. The NEBA requires pipeline companies to report publicly on how Indigenous concerns have been addressed. When the PSA comes into force in June 2016, companies will be responsible for costs and expenses reasonably incurred to respond to a pipeline incident, and for restoring the environment. Claims for compensation may also be made.

16. In November 2014, the Government of Canada's launched an updated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy,[1] which encourages Canadian companies to reflect Canadian values in operations abroad, respect human rights and align with widely-recognized international CSR guidelines.

[1] www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/topics-domaines/other-autre/csr-strat-rse.aspx?lang=eng

17. Voluntary remedial mechanisms that facilitate dialogue, including during the early stages of a dispute, can lead to relatively rapid, low-cost, agreed solutions. Canada maintains two voluntary, non-judicial dispute resolution mechanisms, which are benchmarked against international CSR guidelines and standards:

- Canadian National Contact Point (NCP), established pursuant to OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, available to all sectors and
- Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor, available to the mining, oil and gas sector

18. The updated CSR Strategy links company engagement in these dialogue facilitation processes with access to Government of Canada trade advocacy support, which are made public. These mechanisms complement remedies available to communities through local dispute processes, national human rights institutions, and formal legal processes.

Question 5

19. Past federal government spending restraint measures focused on controlling operating expenses of departments without compromising the delivery of priority services to Canadians. In addition, major transfers to individuals that provide important income support (e.g. Old Age Security and Employment Insurance) and to other levels of government for social programs and health care continued to grow; between 2009-10 and 2014-15, these transfers increased by 11%.

Question 6

20. Canada's official development assistance (ODA) continues to be a significant part of Canada's budgetary framework and foreign policy, and plays a critical role in improving the lives of those most in need around the world. The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act ensures that all Canadian ODA is focused on poverty reduction, takes into account the perspectives of the poor, and is consistent with international human rights standards.

21. Through its ODA on maternal, newborn and child health, Canada promotes reproductive rights and universal access to sexual and reproductive health services. Canada has committed to supporting the full range of reproductive health services, including increasing women's access to family planning and other health services; supporting antenatal, obstetric and postpartum care for mothers and newborns; and treating and preventing sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Question 7

22. Canada has a strong legal framework to prevent and combat discrimination that includes protections in the Charter and F-P/T human rights statutes. Section 15 of the Charter prohibits discrimination by all governments on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, or other analogous grounds. To date, the Supreme Court of Canada has held that the analogous grounds include sexual orientation, non-citizenship, marital status and Aboriginality-residence (status of an Indigenous band member living off reserve).

23. F-P/T human rights statutes prohibit discrimination on various grounds. The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) provides protection against discrimination in employment and the provision of goods, services, facilities, and accommodation, on the

basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (expressly includes pregnancy or child-birth and has been found by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) to include gender identity), sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

24. In addition to the grounds cited above:

- Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta include "gender identity" as a prohibited ground of discrimination.
- Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta prohibit discrimination on the grounds of "gender expression."
- New Brunswick prohibits discrimination on the ground of "social condition." New Brunswick, Quebec and British Columbia prohibit discrimination based on "sex," which includes gender identity.
- Quebec prohibits discrimination on the ground of "social condition" and guarantees the right to social measures and financial assistance as provided for in the law.
- Manitoba cites "social disadvantage" in the applicable characteristics for which an individual cannot be discriminated against.
- Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia prohibit discrimination on the grounds of "source of income;" British Columbia on "lawful source of income in the area of tenancy" and Nunavut on "lawful source of income."

Question 8

25. F-P/T governments have a range of measures in place that address disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Related information can be found under questions 10 (employment), 15 and 16 (social assistance), 18 (child and family services), 19 (poverty reduction), 20 (food security), 21 (homelessness), 22 (health care services), and 25-29 (education).

26. To address on-reserve housing needs, the Government of Canada works in partnership with First Nations leaders and organizations. Since 2006, federal investment in Indigenous housing has contributed to the construction of 11,880 new units and more than 21,665 renovations on-reserve.

27. P/T governments are undertaking a variety of initiatives to invest in quality, affordable off-reserve housing for Indigenous people, particularly in remote parts of the country.

- The Government of Nunavut has developed a Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy and the federal government has financed the construction of more than 250 affordable housing units in the territory.
- Since 2010, the Government of Quebec financed the construction of 637 low-rental housing units in Nunavik, invested in major renovations and is assuming the operating losses of 2,874 social housing units. In 2015, the construction of 20 private and 70 additional social housing units were announced under the Plan Nord and Quebec will assume their operating losses.
- The Government of Manitoba has committed to building 500 affordable and 500 social (rent-geared-to-income) housing units during 2013-2016 and is delivering the Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Community Geothermal Program in First Nations

communities to reduce heating costs by retrofitting homes with geothermal systems using locally-trained workers.

- Under British Columbia's Housing Matters BC strategy, more than 4,450 subsidized housing units are designated for Indigenous people and more than 200 units have been built to provide safe, secure and culturally-appropriate housing for Indigenous youth, women, elders and those struggling with addictions.
- In the Northwest Territories, the Homeownership Entry Level Program allows prospective first-time homebuyers not able to secure mortgage financing, or who are unsure of their abilities as homeowners, to assume the responsibilities of homeownership before purchasing a home.

Question 9

28. Governments are working to enhance the representation of women in power sharing and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors.

- Most P/T governments have employment equity policies in place that apply to public service employment and seek to increase the representation of certain underrepresented groups, including women, at all levels in the workforce. The federal Employment Equity Act, promotes equality in the workplace for four designated groups (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities) and applies to organizations within the federal jurisdiction;
- In June 2014, the Government of Canada endorsed a national goal of 30% women's representation on public and private sector boards by 2019. Currently, women occupy 20.8% of seats on boards of S&P/TSX-listed companies in Canada and almost 34% of Governor-in-Council appointments.
- As of December 2014, the Government of Ontario has implemented a "comply or explain" regulation that requires companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange to report publicly on the number of women on their boards and in executive officer positions. Six provinces and three territories support Ontario's initiative.
- The Government of Quebec has established the *Table des partenaires influents* to increase the number of women on the boards of 60 listed private businesses, and introduced An Act respecting the Governance of State-owned Enterprises that aims for gender parity on the boards of 24 state-owned enterprises. Consequently, the number of women in Quebec serving on private boards has increased from 18.8% in 2012 to 20.0% in 2014 and on public boards from 27.5% in 2006 to 52.0% in 2011.
- The Government of New Brunswick is working to improve gender balance on provincial agencies, boards and commissions. Of the appointments made to these bodies since October 1, 2014, 56.35% have been women.

29. For more information on women's leadership and employment see paragraphs 18-20 of Canada's response to the LOI for the 2015 review of Canada's Sixth Report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

30. Regarding gender wage gaps, governments are committed to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and addressing discrimination in the compensation of work, particularly in traditionally held female-dominated occupations. Most jurisdictions in Canada have pay equity legislation, provisions or policies in place that address gender wage gap discrepancies within their respective public service:

- Six provinces have specific pay equity legislation (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba). Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms also protects equal treatment.
- Alberta's Human Rights Act, Northwest Territories' Public Service Act, as well as Yukon's Employment Standards Act and Human Rights Act have equal pay for work of equal value provisions. British Columbia's Human Rights Code provides for equal pay for similar or substantially similar work based on sex. Newfoundland and Labrador's Human Rights Act has provisions on equal pay for same or similar work without discrimination on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.
- Saskatchewan has a pay equity policy framework.
- As part of its Wage Gap Reduction Initiative, the Government of New Brunswick introduced pay equity in five targeted private sector groups: child care, home support, transition homes, nursing homes, and community residences.
- In April 2015, the Government of Ontario announced the appointment of a Steering Committee to lead the development of a gender wage gap strategy.
- Pay equity provisions for federal employers are found in the CHRA and the Canada Labour Code.

31. Examples of initiatives addressing occupational segregation by sex include:

- Since 2013, the Government of Canada has funded over 40 community-based projects advancing women's representation in the skilled trades and technical professions.
- Manitoba's Trade Up to Your Future initiative encourages women to pursue careers in the non-traditional skilled trades through one-on-one career counselling, assessment of training needs, and the provision of financial assistance to attend training.

32. See Question 31 for more information on measures to ensure women's participation in science and technology.

Question 10

33. F-P/T governments aim to remove barriers to employment and enhance access through a range of targeted measures supported by legislation, policies, action plans, programs and services.

34. In addition to employment equity measures for visible minorities, particularly skilled immigrants, the federal government has:

- Introduced the Foreign Credential Loans Pilot Project to help foreign-trained individuals cover costs of the credentialing process and
- Served more than 355,000 newcomers in 2014-2015 through the Settlement Program, improving their ability to find and retain employment

35. In 2011, the unemployment rates for Inuit people and on-reserve First Nations were 19.5% and 25.2%, respectively, compared to 7.5% for the general population. The 2011 employment rate for Indigenous females (aged 15+) was 6.6% below that of the general Canadian female population (50.4% vs. 57%) and 3.5 percentage points below that of Indigenous males (53.9%). In 2011, the employment rate of Indigenous youth (aged 15-24) was 37.3% compared to non-Indigenous youth (51.3%). In 2014, the unemployment rate

for Indigenous persons with disabilities was 14.8% compared to 10.2% for non- Indigenous persons with disabilities.

36. To address these disparities, the Government of Canada has invested in the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, Skills and Partnership Fund and on-reserve Income Assistance Reform initiative to ensure that Indigenous peoples have the skills they need to secure sustainable and meaningful jobs. Between April 2010 and August 2015, these three programs combined have served approximately 267,000 clients, of which over 90,000 individuals became employed and approximately 39,000 returned to school. Indigenous women made up approximately 45% (121,000) of the total clients served.

37. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy supports urban Indigenous organizations work with governments and stakeholders to help urban Indigenous people overcome barriers to economic participation. The federal government is also working to connect on-reserve income assistance clients aged 18-24 with skills training and jobs.

38. Specific P/T employment projects in remote regions include:

- As of March 31, 2015, the Government of Quebec's support to the Kativik Regional Government sustainable employment and training strategy for Nunavik's mining sector has helped trained 414 Inuit employees and 375 sustainable jobs have been created.
- The Government of Manitoba's East Side Road Transportation Initiative is providing training and employment opportunities in remote indigenous communities.

39. In 2011, the employment rate of persons with disabilities (aged 25-64) was 49%, compared with 79% for persons who did not report having a disability. The Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities assists persons with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment or self-employment through demand-driven training solutions. In 2013-2014, the program served 5,012 Canadians with disabilities in a range of programs and services, including skills training, job placements, and wage subsidies to encourage employers to hire persons with disabilities, helping 1,879 persons find work, 290 return to school and 3,942 to enhance their employability. More information on F-P/T measures to enhance the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities is available in Canada's First Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

40. In 2014, the unemployment rate among youth (aged 15-24) stood at 13.5%, well above the overall unemployment rate of 6.9% for the working age population. In 2014, the unemployment rate for female youth was 11.9% compared to 15% for male youth. The unemployment rate in 2014 was also much higher (21.6%) for youth without a high school diploma. Additionally, vulnerable groups of youth, such as Indigenous people (see above), recent immigrants (last five years) and persons with disabilities, often have greater employment barriers. In 2014, the unemployment rate for recent immigrant youth was 19.6% compared to 13.3% for non-immigrant youth. In 2012, the unemployment rate of youth with disabilities was 25.9%, compared to 15.3% for youth without disabilities.

41. The federal Youth Employment Strategy (YES) provides investments in youth through labour market programming and offers three program streams delivered through 11 federal departments and agencies: Skills Link, Career Focus and Summer Work Experience.

- The Skills Link stream serves youth facing barriers to employment, serving 12,390 youth in 2013-2014.
- The Career Focus stream provides paid internships for post-secondary graduates, serving 3,726 youth in 2013-2014.

- The Summer Work Experience stream helped create 39,757 student jobs in 2013-2014.
- The First Nations and Inuit YES has provided close to 150,000 opportunities to First Nations and Inuit youth in 2013-2014 and helps more than 600 First Nations and Inuit communities design and implement projects each year.

42. Comparable programs can often be found in the provinces and territories.

Question 11

43. Increases to minimum wage rates assist people in achieving a decent living and adjustments are required periodically to maintain its relevance in changing economic and social conditions, such as inflation or annual changes to the Consumer Price Index – a broad measure of the cost of living. They also support P/T poverty reduction strategies discussed under Question 19.

44. In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, minimum wage rates were raised in all jurisdictions in Canada. The highest minimum wage rate in Canada is in Nunavut at $13.00/hour and the lowest in New Brunswick at $10.30/hour. A table outlining the current rates can be found at: http://srv116.services.gc.ca/dimt-wid/sm-mw/intro.aspx?lang=eng.

45. Of note:

- In Newfoundland and Labrador, the minimum wage has increased by 75% in 10 years.
- The Government of Alberta has committed to raising the minimum wage to $15 by 2018, which will represent an overall increase of 47%.

Question 12

46. The federal Employment Insurance (EI) program provides temporary financial assistance to workers who have lost their job while they look for work or upgrade their skills. Regular EI benefits are available to persons who:

- Were employed in insurable employment and contributed to the program
- Have been without work or pay for at least seven consecutive days in the last 52 weeks
- Have worked the required number of insurable hours
- Are ready, willing, and capable of working each day and
- Are actively looking for work

47. In 2013-2014, $10 billion of regular EI benefits were paid to 1.33 million claims and $2 billion to support active re-employment measures.

48. A Family Supplement provides additional benefits to low-income families who are in receipt of the Canada Child Tax Benefit and have an annual family net income of less than $25,921. In 2013-2014, approximately 68,140 women received $77.3 million in family supplements, representing 81.2% of the total family supplement paid.

49. Work-Sharing helps employers and workers during temporary reduction in the normal level of business due to factors beyond the employer's control. It provides income support to employees eligible for EI benefits who agree to work a reduced work week while the business recovers.

50. EI special benefits assist workers who are sick, pregnant, or caring for a newborn, newly adopted, or critically ill child, as well as to those caring for a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death. In 2013-2014, a total of $4.75 billion of EI special benefits was paid to 515,330 claims.

51. The Government of Canada provides annual funding to P/Ts through Labour Market Development Agreements that support the design and delivery of employment programs that help Canadians return to work.

52. Migrant workers, including domestic workers, have the same rights and protections as Canadians under applicable employment standards and occupational health and safety laws. Changes have been made to strengthen employer compliance, deter misuse of programs and reduce the potential for the abuse of migrant workers, including:

- Amendments made to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations put in place a strengthened employer compliance regime, including employer inspections.
- Agreements negotiated between the federal government and Ontario and British Columbia assist temporary foreign workers facing real and substantial risks due to an employer's failure to comply with applicable laws.
- The elimination of the live-in requirement for caregivers. Emergency application processing also exists for live-in caregivers with an urgent need to leave the employment and home where they are in abusive, intimidating or threatening situations.
- Amendments to New Brunswick's Employment Standards Act prohibit employers from taking possession of workers' passports, threatening deportation, reducing wages or changing the terms of employment (domestic workers are excluded from the Act).
- In Quebec, the *Règlement sur la sélection des ressortissants étrangers* contains provisions for live-in caregivers, including that an employer must: facilitate access to language courses outside of working hours for a worker who does not understand or speak French; provide a written contract for stays more than 30 days containing the terms and conditions of employment; and pay the contributions for protection from workplace injuries under the *Loi sur les accidents de travail et les maladies professionnelles*.

Question 13

53. F-P/T human rights legislation provides the main avenue of recourse for complaints of sexual discrimination in the public and private sectors in regards to employment. More information is available in paragraphs 21-23 of Canada's response to the ICCPR LOI.

54. Most governments have workplace policies or regulations to promote respectful work environments and protect public service employees from discrimination, violence and harassment. For example, in 2015, the Government of Ontario released It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, under which the Occupational Health and Safety Act will be strengthened to include: a definition of sexual harassment; an obligation for employers to make reasonable efforts to protect workers from workplace and sexual harassment; and explicit requirements for employers to investigate and address harassment complaints.

55. Sexual harassment, where it leads to physical assault or stalking in the workplace or elsewhere, may be considered a criminal offence under the Criminal Code of Canada. The offences include assault, sexual assault with or without a weapon, aggravated sexual assault

and criminal harassment. Murder committed in the course of criminal harassment is a first degree murder offence, irrespective of whether it was planned and deliberate. The criminal harassment offence may apply to "online criminal harassment" or "cyber-stalking".

56. To protect a victim, the police and prosecutors have other Criminal Code provisions to consider (e.g. uttering threats, intimidation, harassing telephone calls and breach of recognizance). A peace bond setting out conditions to protect the safety of others, can be ordered by a criminal court where there is a reasonable fear that another person will commit a sexual offence against them or cause personal injury to them or their family. The commission of an offence of criminal harassment in the face of a protective court order is an aggravating factor for sentences purposes.

57. Information on equal pay for work of equal value is available under Question 9.

Question 14

58. In 2015, Supreme Court of Canada decisions clarified the scope of freedom of association protected under the Charter in the context of collective bargaining.

- In *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan*, the Court declared that the right to strike is protected by s. 2(d) of the Charter as a component of the collective bargaining process, thus invalidating the Government of Saskatchewan's essential services law. Several P/T governments are reviewing the implications of this ruling on legislated strike prohibitions for public sector workers in their jurisdictions.
- In *Mounted Police Association of Ontario v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 1, the Court held that the federal labour relations scheme for members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Ontario and British Columbia, which provided for an internal staff relations representation program instead of a separate employee association, substantially interfered with the right to a meaningful process of collective bargaining and thereby infringed the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association.

59. In March 2015, the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench declared that sections of the Labour Relations Code prohibiting strikes by employees of approved hospitals and Alberta Health Services and of the Public Service Employee Relations Act prohibiting strikes by employees of the Crown, provincial agencies, boards and commissions, and post-secondary support staff, violate the Charter and are without force and effect. The Court suspended the declaration of invalidity for one year to allow the Government of Alberta to introduce replacement legislation.

60. The right to form or join a trade union is governed by P/T labour-related legislation within their area of responsibility. In unionized environments, those defined as "employees" generally have such rights, although certain restrictions may apply. Typically, senior managers, or any other persons employed in a confidential capacity in matters related to labour relations (e.g. human resource advisors) or who exercise management functions, are considered excluded employees (not represented by unions). Those belonging to occupations governed by a P/T professional body (e.g. medical, dental, architectural, engineering, legal, etc.) generally are not unionized.

Question 15

61. The Canada Social Transfer (CST) provides funding to P/Ts in support of post-secondary education, programs for children, social assistance and other social programs. P/T governments determine social assistance levels in their respective jurisdictions and

design and deliver social services and assistance programs that meet their regional needs. P/Ts are publicly accountable to their residents, but are not required to report to the federal government on how CST funds are disbursed or to provide services that meet specific standards.

62. In order to ensure universal access to an income safety net for all Canadians, irrespective of their place of residence P/Ts are prohibited from imposing any residency requirements for social assistance on citizens, permanent residents, protected persons who have not yet obtained permanent resident status or victims of human trafficking who hold a temporary resident permit.

Question 16

63. Since 2009, all P/T governments have increased their social assistance rates, which vary depending on the specific circumstances of recipients (e.g. financial resources, ability to work, the number of dependents in the household, etc.).

64. Governments are working to enhance their social assistance programs. From 2009:

- Largely based on increases in the provincial Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has increased its basic benefit rates by a total of 14%.
- Automatic annual indexing of benefits for recipients in Quebec has allowed as many as 324,325 households to receive increased benefits.
- In the Yukon, basic social assistance, indexed annually to the CPI to ensure that rates reflect the cost of living, have increased by 25%.
- In Saskatchewan, shelter rates have increased eight times to ensure that allowances keep pace with changes to average market rates.

65. In 2014, the Government of Manitoba launched the Rent Assist program that provides social assistance recipients, living in private rent situations, annual increases between $600 and $840. Rent Assist benefits will reach the target of 75% of Median Market Rent by December 2015.

66. For persons with disabilities:

- British Columbia has increased earning exemptions from $300 to $500 per month for families who have a child with a disability; and $500 to $800 a month for persons on disability assistance (annualized up to $9,600 a year as of January 2015).
- Under New Brunswick's 2009-2014 poverty reduction strategy, recipients with a disability can retain $500 of their monthly earnings with no impact on their social assistance while also keeping 30% of each additional $1 of earnings.
- In 2015, those receiving assistance under the Ontario Disability Support Program will see an increase of $144 a year.

67. Under the federal Income Assistance Program, financial support is provided to eligible individuals and families on-reserve; funding levels are determined in consideration of the P/T assistance rates and eligibility criteria.

Question 17

68. Criminalization of domestic violence as a separate offence is addressed in Canada's response to the 2015 ICCPR LOI.

69. For information on F-P/T measures to address violence against women, including missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and on access to shelters, see Canada's Eighth and Ninth Reports on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), paragraphs 58-65 of the ICCPR LOI, and the Observations of the Government of Canada on the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the inquiry concerning Canada.

70. Key developments in 2015 include:

- In December 2015, the Government of Canada launched a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- The Criminal Code was amended to increase the use of weapon prohibition orders when an offender is convicted of violence against intimate partners and family members.
- RCMP Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: 2015 Update to the National Operational Overview showed that since the 2014 Overview, there have been 32 homicides of Aboriginal females.
- The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), created as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, was released in December 2015 and includes recommendations on domestic violence and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, which came into force in July 2015, enshrines statutory rights at the federal level for victims of crime, including rights to information, protection, participation and restitution, and ensures a complaint process is in place for breaches of these rights.
- PT Premiers met with national Indigenous organizations in July 2015 to discuss follow-up to the TRC recommendations and to express their continued support for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Question 18

71. The Government of Canada has implemented an "Enhanced Prevention Focused Approach" (EPFA) to funding child and family services on-reserve that emphasizes programming, such as parenting skills workshops, early intervention initiatives, and provision of culturally appropriate services. This model has been implemented in six provinces: Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Approximately 68% of First Nation children and families on-reserve benefit from the EPFA across Canada. In addition, funding support was provided to over 100 First Nations Agencies, provinces and the Yukon in 2014. Early results under the EPFA show a shift to alternate forms of care from foster home and institutional to kinship care (from 0% in 2006 to 16% in 2013).

72. Off-reserve, P/T governments are also using prevention-based models to reduce the frequency of Indigenous children being removed from their homes.

- Manitoba's Families First Program, a voluntary home visiting program for vulnerable families with children prenatal to age five, has demonstrated a 25% reduction in participating children coming into care one year after birth (between 2002-2009).
- Between 2012 and 2014, under Saskatchewan's Flexible Response Pilot Project, developed in collaboration with First Nations and Métis communities, 49 fewer

children entered into care, and transfers to child protection services were reduced by over 50%.

- The Government of Alberta has renewed its focus on kinship placement and since April 2012 has seen a 20% reduction in the number of Indigenous children receiving child intervention services (1,405 fewer children).
- In the Northwest Territories, positive trends in the last 10 years show that the percentage of child and family services being provided through court order compared to those through family agreements is decreasing (54% in 2005-2006 compared to 27% in 2014-2015).

73. The complaint filed by the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada was referred to the CHRT by the Canadian Human Rights Commission in October 2008 for a full hearing on the merits. The Tribunal dismissed the complaint on the basis that, in order to determine adverse differentiation under the CHRA, the law requires the comparison of the same services from the same provider (federal and provincial), whereas the complainants had improperly sought a comparison between different service providers with different service recipients.

74. The decision was overturned in April 2012 on judicial review by the Federal Court (FC) holding that the CHRT's interpretation that the CHRA always requires a comparator group which receives the same services from the same provider was unreasonable. It further found that, even if a comparator was required, the CHRT's decision was unreasonable in failing to consider the significance of the federal government's adoption of provincial child welfare standards in its funding policies.

75. The FC's decision to send the matter back to the CHRT for re-consideration was upheld by the Federal Court of Appeal in March 2013. The Tribunal hearing to reconsider the complaint began in February 2013, and closing arguments were heard in October 2014. On January 26, 2016, the Tribunal released its decision on the merits of the complaint. The Tribunal's finding of discrimination against Canada is being reviewed to determine appropriate next steps.

Question 19

76. F-P/T governments offer a range of policies and programs that address the needs of low-income residents, including vulnerable populations (e.g. tax credits, income supports, increases to minimum wage rates, etc.). Most P/T governments have or are developing formal poverty reduction measures. The federal government's approach to poverty reduction emphasizes giving Canadians skills and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency while offering targeted supports for those facing particular barriers.

77. Data illustrates that measures to enhance the income security of all Canadians and investments in poverty reduction measures is having a strong impact on individuals and families.

- The overall rate of low income in Canada has declined, from a high of 15.2% in 1996 to an all-time low of 8.8% in 2011.[2] Public pension reforms (e.g. increases to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors), increased labour market participation of parents with lower incomes and women (driven in part by

[2] Using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs), after-tax measurement, which is the most commonly used measure of low income in Canada, 2011 is the latest year for which data is available that allows for historical comparison.

policies that encourage work such as the National Child Benefit Supplement) have contributed to Canada's declining rate of low income.

- Low-income data based on the new Canadian Income Survey (CIS), shows that the overall rate of low income in Canada was 9.9% in 2012 and 9.7% in 2013 (LICOs, after-tax).
- The low-income rate for children declined from 18.4% in 1996 to 8.5% in 2011, due in part to a dramatic decline in the low-income rates among persons in lone-parent families, from a peak of 49.3% in 1996 to 19.7% in 2011.
- For seniors, the low-income rate has been on a long-term decline, from 30.4% in 1977 to 5.2% in 2011. Based on the new CIS, the low-income rate for children was 10.8% in 2012 and 11.2% in 2013, while for seniors it was 4.4% in 2012 and 3.7% in 2013.
- There have been marked declines in the rate of low income for other vulnerable groups. Between 1998 and 2011, low-income rates declined from 25.0% to 16.1% for Indigenous people living off reserve, from 26.3% to 15.6% for recent immigrants, and from 30.5% to 21.7% for persons with disabilities.

Question 20

78. Climate, transportation and distances to supply centres are among the factors which affect the cost of living and food in Northern Canada. To address these challenges:

- In April 2011, the federal government launched the Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program. Operating in five provinces and three territories, NNC provides a retail subsidy that helps Northerners living in isolated communities access perishable, healthy food at a lower cost and supports community-based nutrition education initiatives that promote healthy eating.
    - During its first year, it helped lower the cost of a basket of healthy foods in the North by an average of 8% and funded more than 300 nutrition initiatives developed by and delivered in Indigenous communities.
    - From 2011-2015, 25% more eligible items were shipped to isolated communities with an average decrease of 5% in the cost of the Revised Northern Food Basket for a family of four. Prices elsewhere in Canada increased by 9.9% over the same period.
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador delivers the Air Foodlift Subsidy program to isolated coastal communities in Labrador that helps offset the cost of air freight on fresh milk and perishable food items such as fruits and vegetables.
- In 2014-2015, under the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, the Government of Manitoba supported the OPCN Ithinto Mechisowin initiative that seeks to achieve food sovereignty through sustainable community economic development around harvest, production and consumption of traditional food by implementing a country foods program.

79. Examples of community-based programs that target vulnerable populations and complement other food security initiatives include:

- New Brunswick's Community Food Action Grant Program that provides up to $5,000 per project for community-led solutions to increase healthy eating and food security for people living in poverty and vulnerable groups.

- Ontario's Student Nutrition Program supports breakfast, snack and lunch programs in schools and communities. Ontario has invested an additional $13.3 million to expand and enhance the Program, including $4 million (phased-in over 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years) for the delivery of the Program in First Nations' educational settings.

80. Other measures include:

- As of September 2015, food allowance rates for those on social assistance in Prince Edward Island increased by up to 17%.
- Effective April 2011, the Government of Nunavut raised its food allowance rates by 15% and in April 2015, the Government of the Northwest Territories adjusted its food basket allowance for those on social assistance to remain current with the cost of living and has approved increasing benefits until 2019 to enable recipients to purchase healthy foods.

Question 21

81. It is estimated that approximately 150,000 people use the emergency shelter system in Canada every year. All governments have invested in efforts to address this issue.

82. Under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), the F-P/T governments and community stakeholders work to find longer-term solutions to homelessness and strengthen community capacity. Since the launch of the program in 2007, HPS has demonstrated considerable results. Between 2007-2014, HPS: created 5,977 new permanent shelter beds to address immediate needs; placed 82,380 people in more stable housing; helped 35,641 Canadians pursue education or training opportunities; and assisted 17,187 people find part-time jobs and 17,256 find full time employment. Since 2007, HPS has approved over $89.5 million for 481 projects that support women, of which 231, totalling over $41 million, target women fleeing domestic violence.

83. Under the HPS, nearly $600 million over five years (2014-2019) has been dedicated to preventing and reducing homelessness, with a focus on a Housing First approach that involves moving chronically or episodically homeless people from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing after which services are provided to assist clients sustain their housing and work towards recovery and reintegration into the community. Five cities (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal and Moncton) received funding under a pilot research project that ended in March 2013 and provided strong evidence that Housing First is an effective way to reduce homelessness.

84. Many jurisdictions in Canada have adopted a Housing First approach in their homelessness strategies. These include the: Newfoundland and Labrador's 2015 Road Map to End Homelessness; Quebec's *Plan d'action interministériel en itinérance* 2015-2020; and Manitoba's All Aboard poverty reduction strategy. In Alberta, since 2009, over 11,332 homeless persons have been provided housing and the supports that will help them remain housed as part of implementing A Plan for Alberta, and 3,837 people have 'graduated' from Housing First programs, meaning they are able to maintain their housing.

85. In May 2015, the City of Medicine Hat, Alberta, became the first Canadian city to end homelessness using a Housing First approach.

86. For information on other federal programs, such as the Investment in Affordable Housing and Shelter Enhancement Program, and P/T measures, such as Ontario's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and Housing Matters BC, see the CEDAW reports cited under Question 17.

Question 22

87. Several factors contribute to the disparities in health outcomes between Indigenous populations and other Canadians. Many Indigenous people experience inequities in the conditions that determine health, such as food insecurity and water quality, poorer quality housing and physical environment, lower educational levels and socioeconomic status, higher prevalence of family violence, fewer employment opportunities and weaker community infrastructure. Geographical remoteness also impacts federal program delivery and challenges the recruitment and retention of primary care nurses.

88. All governments in Canada work towards ensuring access to quality, culturally-appropriate health care services for Indigenous communities; assisting them in addressing health inequalities and disease threats and attaining a level of health comparable to other Canadians.

- Ontario's Aboriginal Health Access Centres (AHACs) offer a blend of traditional Indigenous approaches to health and wellness, primary health care and promotion programs in a culturally-appropriate setting. There are 10 AHACs in Ontario, both on- and off-reserve, that received approximately $23.7 million in funding 2013-14 and again in 2014/15.
- Eight remote Manitoba First Nations communities receive child and adolescent mental health and psychiatric consultations via an enhanced Government of Manitoba Telehealth initiative.
- The Government of Alberta established an Aboriginal Wisdom Council in 2012 to provide guidance and recommendations on service delivery, program design and evaluation for culturally appropriate health service.
- The Government of British Columbia has partnered with the federal government and First Nations to support the creation and implementation of a Tripartite First Nations Health Plan.
- The Government of Canada provides access to a range of primary health care and public health programs and services for First Nations and Inuit communities, including clinical care services 24/7 in 80 remote and isolated First Nations communities.
- The federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program provides eligible First Nations and Inuit people with coverage for drugs, dental care, vision care, medical supplies/equipment, mental health counseling, and medical transportation to access medically-required health services not available in the community of residence. The Program has a budget of approximately $1.128 billion in 2015-2016, and supports 808,000 eligible clients.

Question 23

89. There are no legal restrictions to abortion in Canada. Access to abortion and related services are considered medically necessary procedures under the Canada Health Act, regulated by P/T governments as a health and medical matter and funded under P/T health insurance plans.

90. There are regional differences in access to abortion services. They tend to be located in urban areas, which can present geographic challenges for women residing in rural or remote areas.

- In Newfoundland and Labrador, abortion services are only available in the provincial capital. Persons living in other areas of the province may qualify for financial assistance for travel expenses such as transportation, food and lodging.
- Abortions are not available on Prince Edward Island. However, in June 2015, the provincial government improved access to procedures outside the province (in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick). Women now no longer require a doctor's referral note and may be eligible to access travel support through the Out-of-Province Travel Support Program. Abortions performed at private clinics continue to not be covered by provincial health insurance.
- Effective January 2015, amendments to New Brunswick's Medical Services Payment Act makes abortion in the province an insured medical service, removing the requirements that two doctors state it is medically necessary and that it be performed by a specialist.
- In the Yukon, for women 12 weeks or less into their pregnancy, abortions are performed at Whitehorse General Hospital, in the territorial capital. Over 12 weeks but under 20, women are sent to Vancouver, British Columbia or Edmonton/Calgary, Alberta. Travel costs to the capital or outside the territory are covered by territorial health insurance or NIHB. A similar situation also exists for women in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

91. Governments offer a range of sexual and reproductive health information and public health programs and services, including age-appropriate sexual education in schools, often designed in consultation with various population groups, including Indigenous women, youth, parents, etc.

- The Government of Ontario's updated Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Kindergarten to Grade 12) includes a comprehensive sexual education component adapted to the age and development of students.
- Nova Scotia's Sex?-A Healthy Sexuality Resource for grade 7 students and Manitoba's Growing up OK puberty resource for children aged 9-12 provide comprehensive sexual health and human sexuality information, including on gender identity
- The Government of the Northwest Territories is consulting with NWT communities on a new approach to health and sexual education, including the issues of gender equality and identity.
- The Government of Quebec works with the *Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec* to train Inuit midwives, who offer pre-and-post-natal education and are birth companions in Northern communities.

Question 24

92. Several jurisdictions have taken measures to increase the level of educational attainment and reduce drop-out rates of African Canadian students.

- The Government of Ontario is investing $752,800, over three years to reduce the high school drop-out rate of Somali youth in Toronto by providing youth with mentors, who will support students with individualized learning plans, monitor academic performance and classroom attendance, and work with teachers to support student success. A Somali-speaking project coordinator works with parents to reinforce classroom learning.

- Measures taken in Québec, such as the supplementary educational publication *La contribution des noirs aux Québec – quatre siècles d'une histoire partagée*, have contributed to a noticeable improvement in the academic success of African-Canadian students. For example, 42.6% of Quebec students from the Caribbean or Bermuda, who began high school in 1994-1995, earned a high school diploma within seven years. This increased to 60.6% for the same demographic that began high school in 2005-2006.

- Nova Scotia's African Canadian Services Education Division advises the provincial government on African Canadian Education; promotes African Canadian history, heritage, culture, traditions and contributions to society; ensures African Nova Scotian students have greater access to post-secondary institutions; and works to address systemic racism and discrimination by facilitating implementation of Nova Scotia's Racial Equity Policy.

93. For information on additional measures see Canada's 2014 Interim report on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

Question 25

94. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 69% of Indigenous people (aged 18-24) living off-reserve hold at least a high school diploma (62% in 2006) as compared to 38% of Indigenous people (aged 18-24) living on-reserve (up from 35% in 2006). Additionally, 52% of Indigenous people living off-reserve (aged 25-64) hold post-secondary qualifications (47% in 2006) as compared to 35% of Indigenous people (aged 25-64) living on-reserve (unchanged since 2006).

95. Governments have measures in place, working collaboratively with Indigenous organizations/communities, to enhance the educational success and retention of Indigenous students, on-and-off reserve.

- Over 95% of schools on-reserve participate in the Government of Canada's First Nation Student Success Program that supports projects to increase achievement levels in literacy and mathematics and encourage student retention. Results demonstrate enhanced education achievements by students and positive effects for schools and communities. Through the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative it also funds culturally appropriate activities for early childhood education and care providers in Indigenous communities.

- The Government of Quebec's *Projets ponctuels autochtones* program supports, among other things, projects that increase the motivation, self-esteem, and retention of Indigenous students, through the organization of activities, such as events recognizing academic achievement, literacy summer camps and graduation ceremonies.

- Ontario is supporting Frontier College in the implementation of a community-based literacy pilot project for children and youth in Cat Lake First Nation.

- Manitoba's Youth in Care Tuition Waiver Program ensures opportunities to access post-secondary education regardless of socio-economic background. In 2013-2014, over 40 tuition waivers were granted by six post-secondary institutions, of which approximately 38% per cent were granted to Indigenous students.

96. Regarding education in indigenous languages:

- The Government of Canada supports First Nations in the development and delivery of indigenous languages programs such as the Education Partnerships Program.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, teacher and student resources have been translated using indigenous languages and in some Labrador region schools curricula is taught in indigenous languages.
- The Government of New Brunswick is investing in introductory level Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik language high school curriculum (online and classroom).
- Under Ontario's Native Languages Program, language courses (Cayuga, Cree, Delaware, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree and Oneida) are available to students from Grades 1 to 12.
- Three Northwest Territories schools offer Indigenous language immersion programs at various grade levels and schools across the territory must devote 9% of the school week to second language classes for students from Kindergarten to Grade 9.

97. Information on additional measures can be found in Canada's 2014 Interim Report on the ICERD.

Question 26

98. Canada ranks first in the OECD for the proportion of the population who completed college or university education. Data from the 2011 NHS shows:

- 11,782,700 adults aged 25-64 had post-secondary qualifications, representing 64.1% of the total population in that age group compared to 60.7% in 2006.
- Women accounted for 59.1% of adults aged 25-34 with a university degree.
- Among the Canadian population aged 15 and over, immigrants (59.5%) and visible minorities (58.1%) were more likely to have post-secondary qualifications, whereas persons with disabilities (46.4%) and Indigenous people (38.1%) lag behind the population as a whole in post-secondary attainment.

99. Measures to ensure affordable and accessible post-secondary education include student loan programs, non-repayable grants, bursaries, tax credits and limits on tuition increases. Additionally:

- The Government of Canada encourages the use of Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) to save for children's post-secondary education. The Canada Education Savings Grant provides a minimum 20% grant on the first $2,500 of annual contributions made in an RESP. Higher grant amounts (30-40%) and other incentives, such as the Canada Learning Bond, are available for low- and middle-income families. In 2014, $3.04 billion was withdrawn from the RESPs of 379,120 beneficiaries to help pay for their education–an average of $8,025 per student.
- For Indigenous students, the Government of New Brunswick supports specialized recruiting, orientation and bridging activities, cultural training, the development of First Nations language resources, and the funding of campus-based Indigenous counsellors and Elders-in-Residence.
- The Government of Northwest Territories' Aboriginal Literacy and Basic Education program improves access to post-secondary/higher education and training for adults by removing barriers, including free tuition, access to learning within the community, provision of daycare and living allowance.

- There are no tuition fees in the Quebec public college system, and related expenses amount to a few hundred dollars per year per student.

Question 27

100. All governments provide inclusive education to children with disabilities through supports adapted to the particular needs/exceptionalities and differentiated learning requirements of individual students. These measures include targeted funding, use of assisted learning technologies, access to specialists (e.g. guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, teachers of the deaf/interpreters, etc.), adaptation of physical environments, individualized learning plans. Examples of ongoing initiatives:

- Through the Rural and Northern Clinician Grant, school divisions in Manitoba struggling to recruit specialists can enter into "return of service" agreements that provide free tuition to students in those fields in return for service upon graduation. The program has dramatically reduced the vacancy rate and has improved the availability of these services in Northern Manitoba schools.
- Special education programming funded by the federal government uses intervention and assessment based approaches to support First Nations to deliver and access programs and services based on the particular needs of a community and region. Direct classroom and school-based services are complemented by indirect service activities that provide First Nation students with access to special education services that are culturally sensitive and reflective of generally accepted provincial/territorial standards.

Question 28

101. Further to those highlighted under Question 25, examples of measures that support the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages include:

- The goals of the Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy, developed with the guidance of all seven Indigenous language groups recognized in the province, include establishing an Indigenous languages research group, developing a partnership agreement and communication strategy to promote Indigenous languages, and a teacher training program to produce more fluent speakers/teachers.
- The Government of Canada provides up to $16 million annually aimed at promoting, revitalizing and preserving Indigenous languages and cultures through the Aboriginal Languages Initiative ($5 million for funding of community languages programs), Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting ($8 million) and Canada-Territorial Language Cooperation Agreements ($3 million).
- In 2014, the Government of Northwest Territories increased the funding and decision-making authority of regional Indigenous governments, recognizing their right to manage their own language revitalization efforts. An Aboriginal Languages Secretariat was established to support regional Indigenous Governments in the development of five-year Regional Language Plans that identify specific actions on how to promote and revitalize Indigenous languages in their unique regions.

Question 29

102. In April 2014, the federal government introduced Bill C-33, the First Nations Control of the First Nations Education Act in the Parliament of Canada.

103. In May 2014, Bill C-33 was put on hold given unresolved differences on how best to proceed. With the dissolution of Parliament in August 2015, the proposed Bill C-33 was terminated.

Question 30

104. The Government of Canada has undertaken a number of initiatives to increase and facilitate access to the Internet.

- The Connecting Canadians program has committed $305 million over five years to extend and expand broadband access to over 280,000 households. The program has targeted funding provisions to support very remote and Indigenous communities.
- The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) released a March 2015 decision that required the incumbent operator in Northern Canada, that provides service to many remote communities, to lower its rates for certain residential Internet services. The Commission also issued decisions and is monitoring the process of broadband expansion,[3] with services completed and underway for 287 rural and remote communities.
- In April 2015, the CRTC launched a review of basic telecommunications services, including an examination of whether broadband Internet should be considered a basic telecommunications service, as well as the Commission's role in ensuring the availability of affordable services, including to people living in rural and remote areas.

Question 31

105. According to a 2013 Statistics Canada study, women in Canada represent the majority of university graduates, but are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science (STEM) fields. Women accounted for 39% of university graduates aged 25-34 with a STEM degree in 2011, compared with 66% of university graduates in non-STEM programs.

106. Governments are promoting careers for women in the high-demand STEM fields as well as the skilled trades. Efforts to enhance the participation of women start in elementary and secondary school and include the development of gender-neutral curricula and educational resources.

- In May 2015, the Government of Manitoba hosted the Sparking Interest Girls' Forum, which brought together 70 Grade 5 and 6 female students and women working in the skilled trades and STEM occupations to debunk preconceived notions and answer questions.

[3] In three decisions issued in 2010, the Commission approved reductions by several companies from accounts that set-aside funds to expand broadband service to certain rural and remote communities.

- The Government of New Brunswick hosts Trades & Tech Gala for Girls events to introduce female students in high school to women from their community working or studying in skilled trades and technology sectors.

- The Government of Yukon funds the All-Girls Science Club that provides Grades 5-7 female students with opportunities to explore new scientific concepts, conduct hands-on experiments, ask questions and express their ideas in a girls-only environment and a connection to female role models working in the STEM sectors.

107. At the post-secondary level:

- The Government of Canada supports up to 3,000 full-time internships for graduates in the STEM fields and skilled trades and offers the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant (AIG) and Apprenticeship Completion Grant (ACG), to reduce financial barriers to accessing training. Approximately 576,000 grants have been issued; in 2013-2014, women received 8.9% of AIGs, up from 5.7% in 2007-2008, and 8.3% of ACGs, up from 7.6% in 2009-2010.

- In Ontario, the Women in Engineering Mentorship Initiative partners female engineering students with women engineers working in the Ontario Public Service to help with the transition into a traditionally male-dominated profession through mentoring and networking opportunities.